GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:773
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2016
Accessibility to PDS
Azad Shri Kirti (JHA)

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public Distribution System (PDS) is easily accessible to the people particularly in Bihar;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) the number of persons belonging to the BPL category benefitted under the PDS during the last two years; and
(d) the steps being taken to bring reforms in functioning of the PDS particularly in the remote and inaccessible areas?

Answer

MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)
(a) to (c) : Government of India has enacted the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) on 10.09.2013, which inter-alia provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50 % of the urban population of the country for receiving foodgrains at subsidized prices under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). Under the Act, the coverage under TPDS has been delinked from poverty estimates. As per the above coverage and based on 2011 census population, the number of persons eligible for subsidized foodgrains under TPDS in the country is estimated at about 81.35 crore. Based on the preparedness and identification of beneficiaries for coverage under the NFSA, reported by them, allocation of foodgrains to 28 States/UTs including Bihar have started under the Act. About 68 crore beneficiaries have been covered in these 28 States/UTs. The number of beneficiaries under NFSA in Bihar is 8.57 crore. In remaining 8 States/UT, foodgrains allocation under excising TPDS is continuing

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(d): TPDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India. The operational responsibilities for allocation and distribution of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of families, .issuance of ration cards to them and supervision over and monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.
Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous endeavour. To improve functioning of TPDS and to curb leakage / diversion of foodgrains, Government has been regularly issuing advisories and holding meetings, conferences, etc. wherein State/UT Governments are requested for review of lists of beneficiaries, improving offtake of allocated foodgrains, ensure timely availability of foodgrains at FPSs, greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels, improving the viability of FPS operations, etc. The NFSA, 2013 also contains measures for reforms in TPDS, to be under taken progressively by the Central and State/UT Governments. These reforms include cash transfer, door-step delivery of foodgrains at the FPS, application of information and communication technology tools including end to end computerization preference to public institutions/bodies in licensing of FPS, etc.
The NFSA also provides that while implementing the provisions of this Act and the schemes for meeting specified entitlements, the Central Government and the State Governments shall give special focus to the needs of the vulnerable groups, specially in remote areas and other areas which are difficult to access, hilly and tribal areas for ensuring their food security.
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